

ENVISIONING THE FUTURE OF COASTAL MANAGEMENT

STAKEHOLDER DISCUSSION SUMMARY BY TOPIC: WATER QUALITY

TOPIC SUMMARY

The topic of water quality was discussed at all five regional meetings, in a total of six breakout sessions. From these breakout groups the following themes surfaced:

Watersheds - Watershed approaches are an important aspect. The NEP model is a good one and should be duplicated in more watersheds. State CZ program boundaries should be based on watersheds.

Land Use/Development - “Development” as a goal of the CZMA should be eliminated; it will happen regardless. The CZMA is important because it is the only federal act that even remotely addresses land use.

Adaptable Water Quality Standards – One-size-fits-all water quality standards don’t work. Regions, states and localities should have a voice in developing standards for their areas based on uses.

OBSTACLES

Lack of funding: Lack of funding for data needs, development of TMDLs, etc.

Lack of enforcement and regulations: Existing regulations and policies are not adequately enforced and/or are inconsistently interpreted in various programs. Local ordinances are not always based on sound practices.

Lack of organic act for NOAA

Scientific challenges: Poor data quality, uncertainty about systems and causes of decreased water quality

Standards: Oriented too much towards point source vs. NPS; oriented too much towards freshwater vs. estuarine and ocean water

Community/Politics: Lack of knowledge/awareness, management left to experts, community members not involved.

Interagency: Multiple federal agencies involved; lack of coordination of monitoring; lack of federal lead with primary authority

Regional/watershed coordination: A lot of agency and organizational time needed - a serious capacity issue.

PARTICIPANT-GENERATED SOLUTIONS:

Data

- Develop integrated/consistent data management among agencies and programs – EPA, NOAA, USGS, OOS's, etc. Examples: CA Integrated Water Quality System (CIWQS); Chesapeake Bay monitoring; San Joaquin (SWAMP format reporting).

Low Impact Development

- Promote Low Impact Development and Smart Growth through research, education, funding, etc.

Financial

- Relax restrictions against spending public money on private property.
- Collect water quality user fees from all users of ocean resources, to be applied to water quality improvements.
- Promote storm-water user fees.
- Perform economic evaluations of ecosystem services - who pays and who benefits.

Land acquisition

- Purchase or obtain easements for riparian buffers.

Monitoring

- State and fed programs need to be more pro-active about engaging and partnering with local government for monitoring. Provide funding and increase local technical capacity.

Regulatory

- Ensure that water quality conditions are factored into decision-making at local, state, and federal levels.
- CZMA should have direct authority over farming and forestry, which are typically not regulated locally.
- Require certain Best Management Practices for specific land use activities in the Coastal Zone.
- Provide federal support for local and state regulation of estuarine and coastal resources; states should have authority to adjust standards to meet their needs.
- Authorize citizen suits in CZMA similar to Clean Water Act.
- Establish amnesty period for Wastewater Treatment Plants and collections systems to candidly identify upgrade needs without fear of repercussions from past under-reporting.
- Site specific discharge requirements such as Monterey Peninsula Discharge program.

Improve specific programs

- CWA section 319 should be reformed – currently, jurisdictions which are aggressive under the MS4 program reduce their eligibility for 319 funds.
- Amend section 319 to focus on coastal issues.
- NPDES stormwater program should require stormwater permits for ALL coastal jurisdictions.
- Shift focus more towards prevention and less on 303-D list removal.
- CWMA section 6217 should contain more prioritization.
- USDA should be more accountable, work more on watershed basis. Remove ag exceptions from CWA.

- Ensure that CZ grant funds not being used to destroy habitat or undermine ecosystem services.

Interagency coordination

- CMZA's role is integration – helping the other branches of government work together to solve problems, integrate programs and funding.
- Increase coordination between 319 (CWA Nonpoint Source Grant Program), 6217 (Coastal Nonpoint Program), MS4 (CWA NPDES Stormwater), BEACH Act, WRDA, ACE, USDA, etc.
- Address the fact that the money that is making changes on a landscape scale is from SBA, DOT, CDBG, USGS.
- Form multi-agency multi-state authorities to administer grant funds and oversee prioritized watershed protection.

Regional coordination/ watershed

- Have federal agencies all agree to common goals within a watershed.
- Replicate NEP model in more watersheds, smaller watersheds.
- Support ability to have focused meetings and processes, which have better chance of success. Focus on efforts that will have concrete outcomes and authority. Task forces without teeth use up valuable time.
- Develop watershed councils, such as Oregon watershed councils, organized through salmon recovery funding, specific protocols for watershed assessments, funding for restoration efforts, prioritization of mitigation efforts.
- Use Critical Coastal Areas as pilot project for NOAA/Federal agencies to fund watershed mgmt approaches, working together with state partners

Priorities

- Set priorities, such as aquaculture areas, shellfish beds, and set performance standards.
- Focus CZMA more specifically towards coastal uses rather than water quality standards, which is the purview of CWA.

Local Communities

- Develop a “certified community” program.
- Provide incentives for local communities to integrate water and land use programs and regulations.

Public Education

- Educate property owners and developers on riparian issues; debunk myths of hardened shoreline.
- Develop integrated federal water quality public education campaign. Pick a topic for a year and involve ALL federal agencies (NERRS, EPA, Sea Grant, Marine Advisory Service, NOAA, Maritime Administration, Coast Guard, etc.).